All You Have To Do

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All You Have To Do

by WordsAblaze

Summary

Hannibal traps Will against the island counter with a strange, solemn expression, one that Will doesn't recall having been faced with and therefore can't entirely decipher. "Do you so inherently regard yourself as unworthy of compliments?" he asks.

And isn't that a question.

Will swallows, tilting his head downwards. "I didn't say that."

Of course, Hannibal doesn't entertain his evasion, and uses two fingers to gently nudge his face back upwards so their eyes meet once more.

Notes

nothing like good ol' insecurity sometimes,,,

day 19 prompts used: floral bouquet / psychological

See the end of the work for more notes

Will isn't quite sure how it happens but, somewhere between one neurological assessment and the other, he ends up working at a florist's.

It's hardly the most unexpected twist in his life, given his return to therapy with the psychiatrist he'd accused of murder and manipulation—not to mention his developing relationship with the same man, something that would probably give both Alana and Jack heart palpitations—but it's still the one that elicits the most raised eyebrows at the bureau.

Regardless, he goes home after his first day with a lopsided bouquet because, as good as he is with his hands, he has little experience of building with components so easily bent and broken. It had been extremely frustrating, he'll admit, to be unable to correctly figure out the best way to assemble flowers whilst keeping them both visually appealing *and* structurally sound.

Hannibal's eyes crinkle in amusement as he spots the scratches littered across Will's hands, glancing between them and the roses he's just been gifted before nodding. "I'll find an appropriate vase."

The vase he picks ends up being one Abigail had made during a pottery class provided at the rehabilitation centre, beautifully painted but a structurally lopsided nightmare, not that they'd phrased their praise as such to her. Will groans when he sees it at the centre of the table by the time he returns from having freshened up, raising an eyebrow. "You're trying to emotionally blackmail me into being proud of myself."

Hannibal glares at him, though not seriously. "Will. It would be remiss not to celebrate your first attempt at a floral arrangement."

"Don't patronise me, Hannibal," Will replies, but takes a seat anyway, nowhere near annoyed enough to decline their meal or abandon their routine. "What's on the menu today?"

"I should think you would recognise the fruits of your own labour?"

Will finally takes his eyes off Hannibal and blinks in surprise as the relatively simple-looking stuffed salmon—the product of his recent fishing trip, it seems—on their plates. "You guessed I would bring you back flowers and wanted the whole spread to be of my design," Will realises, a smile spreading across his face. Although Hannibal doesn't verbally reply, the pride in his eyes is enough to confirm any and all suspicions of him being, in more ways than one, *besotted* .

The dish is far more beautiful than the bouquet of flowers framing it, and Will savours every bite, waiting until both of their plates are empty before rising and lifting Hannibal's chin upwards, then leaning down and kissing him delicately, gratefully. He can taste the food between their lips, and Hannibal makes a fascinated sort of rumbling noise as he reaches up to thread a hand through Will's hair.

"The phrase 'chef's kiss' has never been so fitting," Will murmurs once they pull apart to breathe.

Hannibal's eyes re-open slowly, and he hums in acknowledgement, licking his lips. "And what is it they say to compliment florists?"

Will snorts. "I doubt that's something I would ever encounter or need to remember."

It's several minutes later, once they've cleared the table and washed the dishes, that Hannibal traps Will against the island counter with a strange, solemn expression, one that Will doesn't recall having been faced with and therefore can't entirely decipher. "Do you so inherently regard yourself as unworthy of compliments?" Hannibal asks.

And isn't *that* a question.

Will swallows, tilting his head downwards to stare at what he still considers to be extremely pretentious tiles. "I didn't say that."

Of course, Hannibal doesn't entertain his evasion, and uses two fingers to gently nudge his face back upwards so their eyes meet once more. "Will, my love, you have no need to prove yourself adept to me. I did not tie myself to you with the condition of sophistication."

"How could you have, when there's none to be found?" Will replies unthinkingly, regretting his lack of outcome evaluation when Hannibal's brows furrow in a psychiatric kind of disapproval.

" *Will.* "

" *Hannibal,* " he bites out in reply, wishing he were a little taller so their gazes could meet head on rather than Hannibal practically looming over him. It's not that he's intimidated per se, but still.

Hannibal's thumb traces across from his nose to the corner of his eye, and he leans down so close that Will can taste his next exhale. "Will Graham, the depths of your insecurities astound me."

Will blinks in surprise, then laughs. "How unprofessional of you to admit."

"You're right," Hannibal replies, pulling back just enough for their breaths to untangle, "perhaps this is a topic better suited to my office rather than our kitchen."

" *Our* kitchen?" Will echoes.

Hannibal's smile is sincere as he nods. "Your mugs are in the cupboard. Your fish are in the fridge. And now, your flowers are on the table. You no longer require any invitation to enter this kitchen, and its space has been yours to adapt and evolve as you wish for quite some time now."

The words are spoken softly but they may as well be crowbars, prying open some long lost chamber in Will's heart. He thinks back to the way everyone seems to discuss this kitchen as sacred ground, bountiful but forbidden, and then recalls the way not a single of his intrusions or additions has been refuted or refused. The crowbars fall through the bottom of his stomach

as Will's heart skips a beat, and he closes his eyes for a moment, reopening them to find Hannibal waiting far too patiently, far too knowingly.

"Even if I can't recognise one spice from the other?"

Clearly amused, Hannibal nods. "I suppose that limitation compensates for my own inability to recognise one of your dogs from the other."

"Hey!" Will protests on said dogs' behalf, but the corner of his mouth curls upwards in betrayal. Hannibal takes that as invitation to lean forward and kiss him, deeper this time, his hands tugging on Will's hair to pull him as close as possible when their tongues meet, leaving them both breathing heavily when they finally pull apart. Will licks his lips, then smirks up at Hannibal. "Is this your attempt at operant conditioning?"

"Whatever do you mean, my dear Will?" Hannibal asks, his voice a satisfying rasp as his gaze flickers between Will's eyes and lips in rapid succession.

"Your dear Will?" Will echoes, struggling, despite the taste of Hannibal's tongue still lingering in his mouth, to equate himself to something *dear*.

One again, Hannibal seems displeased by his incredulous tone, and his gaze sharpens, his fingers tightening around Will's curls with an intensity that borders on painful. "You are most dear to me, Will, and that is not something you have any authority to doubt."

Will swallows the argument in his throat—he tucks it away for a later date because it's too stubborn to fade away entirely—and nods, his hands gently squeezing Hannibal's hips in gratitude. "I think… I think it would be safe to say the sentiment goes both ways," he replies slowly.

"And what would it be *unsafe* to say?" Hannibal asks as his grip loosens just enough to become a form of reassurance as opposed to the warning it had just been. Will shivers as fingers dance apologetically across his scalp, and it takes an incredible amount of effort to keep himself from simply melting into the touch, into the conversation Hannibal is hedging towards.

But Will has no desire to turn the moment into a therapy session so he just grins lazily and shrugs, leaning forwards so their lips are almost but not quite touching,leaving just the hint of distance between them. "You'll just have to wait until I say it's safe to find out," he murmurs.

Hannibal shivers as the words vibrate through his lips, and nods understandingly, though Will can see the furious curiosity lurking in his eyes. Still, to his credit, he doesn't argue the point further, simply closing the distance between them once again; perhaps, Will thinks as his eyes slip shut and Hannibal steals the breath from behind his teeth, there's something to gain from this whole conditioning thing after all.

End Notes

btw the conditioning works and one of Will's bouquets is always on the table from this point on :')

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